

will make America the world's greatest country in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:22 p.m. at the Clark Athletic Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Thomas Menino of Boston; Paul Evans, Boston police commissioner; William Bulger,

president, and Sherry H. Penney, chancellor, University of Massachusetts; Gov. William Weld and Attorney General L. Scott Harshbarger of Massachusetts; and Lanita Tolentino and Terry Thompson, members of the Mayor's Youth Council. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Statement on the Death of Deng Xiaoping *February 19, 1997*

I was saddened today to learn of the death of Deng Xiaoping, China's senior statesman. Over the past two decades, Mr. Deng was an extraordinary figure on the world stage and the driving force behind China's decision to normalize relations with the United States. His historic visit to our country in 1979 laid the foundation for the rapid expansion of relations and cooperation between China and the United States.

Mr. Deng's long life spanned a century of turmoil, tribulation, and remarkable change in China. He spurred China's historic economic reform program, which greatly improved living standards in China and modernized much of the nation.

China today plays an important role in world affairs in no small part because of Mr. Deng's decision to open his country to the outside world. The continued emergence of China as a great power that is stable politically and open economically, that respects human rights and the rule of law, and that becomes a full partner in building a secure international order, is profoundly in America's interest and in the world's interest.

I want to convey my personal condolences to China's President Jiang Zemin, to Mr. Deng's widow, Zhuo Lin, and to the Chinese people.

## Remarks on Medicaid Patient Protection and an Exchange With Reporters *February 20, 1997*

*The President.* Thank you. I was just sitting here thinking that, in the spirit of full disclosure, the Vice President and Secretary Shalala may have a particular vested interest in health care issues—that they both just got back from South Africa, and when they got back he got on a plane and went to Los Angeles to speak to the AFL-CIO convention; he got back at 4 o'clock this morning. And she got on a plane and went to New York with me to a welfare reform event. And I don't see how either one of them are still standing up. [*Laughter*] But they probably have a strong interest in what happened here today.

Let me thank, if I might, first of all, all the Members of Congress who are here from both

parties for their leadership on this issue; and Bruce Vladeck and Bruce Fried for what they have done; and the representatives of the groups over here to my right for being here and for supporting our endeavors.

Today I'm pleased to announce that we're taking steps to see that Medicaid beneficiaries continue to get access to the fullest quality health care. In recent years, the medical community and the insurance industry have joined to reform and improve American health care, working with us, and much of this progress has come through managed care, which emphasizes prevention, provides better care, and controls costs at the same time, when the plans are the best and the right kind of managed care plans.